

AN EXAMPLE FOR CHRISTIANS

Genesis 22:1-13

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Christians are familiar with the account of Abraham being commanded by God to offer his son as a sacrifice and how Abraham handled that is an example for every believer for as God dealt with Abraham, so He deals to varying degrees with all other believers. *"...Let no person say when he/she is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither does He tempt any person..."* However, God does TRY and TEST his people.

In no way will any other person attain the same level that Abraham reached, neither shall any other person be tried in the same way as was Abraham, but every single believer will be tested. No believer should be surprised as though something strange has happened if great tests should be put upon him/her. So, believer, expect God to test YOU.

I. GOD DOES NOT DEAL WITH THE WORLD AS HE DOES HIS OWN PEOPLE

1. God does deal with His own people.
 - He is never far away from them and does not leave them to themselves.
 - Considering the heavens and the world things which God has created, one asks like Job, "who am I that God sets a watch over me...?"
 - It is a great wonder that God should deal with any of mankind at all, but with believers God is constantly there with each one.
 - Believers are precious in God's sight and it is far better to feel God's hand upon one than to be forgotten or not noticed by God at all.
 - What an awful thing to be cast away from God.
2. God tests His own people.
 - God tested His people for their "fear" of Him.
 - God delights in a person who has a deep, sincere, holy reverence for Him.
 - God will try each believer to see if he/she really fears Him or not and sometimes the test will be severe.
 - Sadly, believers are afraid of the consequences of God's testing which shows that that person doesn't fear God enough for fear of God will cause one to not be afraid of anything else.
 - God will try His people's faith.
 - When commanded to slay, sacrifice his own son, Abraham's faith in God was severely tested.
 - In Isaac lay the heritage, the seed of Abraham and if Isaac should die what about God's promise that Abraham's descendants would be like the sand on a sea shore.
 - Abraham never staggered, never hesitated for his faith in God was there.
 - Although Abraham did not understand, he still believed and trusted in God and would do whatever God wanted him to do.
 - God will try His people's love.
 - Isaac was a gift from God and indeed the dearest, most precious, most beloved thing that Abraham had.
 - Isaac could easily have become an idol to Abraham, keeping him away from God.
 - God wanted no rivals, no competition, so God tested Abraham to see which had the most love in Abraham's heart.

3. God, HIMSELF, tests His own people.
 - Satan, the devil tested Job by God's permission.
 - God, Himself, however, in person, tested Abraham.
 - There were many ways God could have tested Abraham
 - Lot failed God at Sodom but God did not test him in person.
 - Abraham was much stronger than Lot, therefore God tested Abraham, Himself.
 - In testing Abraham, Himself, God honored him.
 - ***"...Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked in me, and lead me in the way everlasting..."***
4. God tests His own people again and again.
 - After this severe test of offering his son as a sacrifice, God still tested Abraham even more.
 - God blessed Abraham with precious promises and then tested him about those fulfilled promises.
 - Abraham left his own country, his own people.
 - Abraham ousted a servant woman and her son which was by Abraham.
 - By faith Abraham fought four kings and put them into captivity.
 - By faith Abraham refused to receive riches from other kings.
 - God did not test/try Abraham right at the beginning, but after a while.
 - There was a time of "education," learning, growing, maturing which prepared Abraham for this great testing time.
 - God knows how to educate His own so that they can endure what is to come and to make one able to stand firm under God's testing.
5. God tests His own people by actual experiences.
 - God did not test Abraham by words only.
 - God did not ask Abraham "will you do this or that?"
 - It is one thing to SAY "yes," but an entirely different thing to actually do it.
 - God does not prove His own people in word only, but in deed and in truth.
 - God tests His own by telling them to do something "RIGHT NOW!"
 - It was at once that Abraham was told to go get his son and go to such and such a place and offer his son as a sacrifice.
 - Sometimes God commands for something to be done immediately, as a test to His own.
6. God tests some of His own people more thoroughly than others.
 - God tested Abraham most severely.
 - "Offer your son to ME as a sacrifice!"
 - God never asks anything of His own people that He, Himself would not do.
 - God gave His only begotten Son, freely.
 - God spared Abraham's son, but not His own Son.
7. If God does try His own people, He blesses them greatly by doing so.
 - How can tests, trials, difficulties, hardships sent by God bring blessings?
 - Joseph was sold into slavery - but became head over all Egypt and sent for his father and family and the seed of Abraham grew in Egypt.
 - Abraham was prevented from allowing his son Isaac to divide himself from God.
 - The ram caught in the bush was the substitute for Abraham's son, thus revealing God's own Son, the Lamb of God.
 - Abraham was blessed by being able to commune with God, the Heavenly Father.
 - Unsuspected at the time of trials, blessings will come later.

II. GOD'S OWN PEOPLE HAVE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD IN THEIR TESTINGS

1. When God does speak to one of His own, that person is honored by God.
 - God called Abraham, alone.
 - God spoke directly to Samuel.
 - God spoke directly to Saul, known later as Paul.
 - God knows each of His own personally and totally.
 - What greater honor can there be than to be called directly, personally by almighty God?
2. When called by God, that person is ready to be taught.
 - When God called Abraham, he answered, "Here am I."
 - God knows when one of His own is ready to be taught and will then speak directly to that one.
 - Blessed and happy is the person who is ready to be taught by God.
3. When called by God, that person must be ready to obey.
 - Abraham obeyed God in the very moment God told him what he was to do.
 - No matter where or what or how God wants His own to go or do, if one is not willing to obey, then that person is not mature nor ready to do God's service.
 - ***"..He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life..." "...He that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life..."***
 - If one is a true, sincere believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he/she will also obey Him, no matter what is asked.
4. When called by God, that person will be ready to surrender all.
 - Abraham answered, ***"...Here am I..."***
 - He didn't know what God was going to ask of him, but Abraham was ready to do whatever or give up whatever.
 - All that any person has belongs to God anyhow, therefore one must be ready to learn, obey and to surrender.
5. When called by God, that person must be ready to be "inspected."
 - When called by God, Adam and Eve hid themselves in the Garden of Eden.
 - When Abraham was called, he stood up and answered "Here am I..."
 - Abraham was ready for God to "inspect" him for God already knew all about him anyhow but he had nothing to try to hide from God.
6. When called by God, any who are prepared, have been made ready by the grace of God.
 - Abraham could not have said, "Here am I" if God had not already educated and prepared him.
 - By God's grace, Abraham was ready for God's testing.
 - Unless God's grace has done great things for a person, that person is not ready for just any kind of service or trial.
 - Every act of grace prepares one for a greater task.
 - Abraham left his homeland and family.
 - Abraham refused to go with or be like Lot.
 - Abraham refused to yield to the wicked kings and their offerings.
 - Abraham sent away a servant woman and his son by her.
 - Abraham prevailed in prayer as he asked for God's mercy to be upon the wicked cities.

CONCLUSION:

1. Believers are prepared by grace to respond to God's call and he/she will be kept ready to the very end.
2. Happy is the person who can say as Abraham, "Here am I"
3. May God call each of us in this place and may each of us reply as did Abraham, "Here am I..."

